

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8166

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 5700

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR

EO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJ: PROSPECTS OF A SYRIAN NEGOTIATION

REF: SECTO 11005

1. I SAW RABIN TODAY AND CARRIED OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTTEL, NOTING THAT THE SAME POINTS WERE BEING MADE TO DINITZ IN WASHINGTON. (RABIN SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET SEEN ANY REPORT FROM DINITZ).

2. RABIN SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR UP ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH MAY POSSIBLY CLOUD OUR RELATIONS. HE WANTED THE SECRETARY TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS THAT HE, AS A PRIME MINISTER, FACES WITH HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET, WITH THE KNESSET, AND IN GENERAL WITH THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. HE NOTED THAT OPPOSITION LEADER BEGIN HAD CLEVERLY ATTEMPTED TO EXPLOIT IN THE KNESSET DEBATE PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT TO DADAT THAT HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE STAGNATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IN DOING SO, BEGIN'S EFFORT WAS TO DOWNGRADE RABIN'S STATEMENT IN THE DEBATE THAT THE INTERIM AGREEMENT OFFERED REAL PROSPECTS OF RELAXED TENSIONS AND PRESSURES IN THE AREA FRO AN EXTENDED PERIOD. AS BEGIN PUT IT, ISRAEL NOW FACES IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA AND A FURTHER SURRENDER OF ISRAELI-HELD TERRITORY WHICH WOULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE

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THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE KNESSET

DEBATE, FAVORABLE THOUGH IT WAS, HAD STIRRED PUBLIC UNEASINESS AS TO WHAT LIES AHEAD; IT WAS TO ASSUAGE SUCH FEARS THAT HE AS PRIME MINISTER FELT COMPELLED TO SPEAK PUBLICLY ON THE SYRIAN ISSUE.

3. RABIN POINTED OUT THAT WHAT HE HAD STATED PUBLICLY WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE POSITION HE HAD TAKEN IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE, WHEN HE HAD INDICATED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED FOR SOME MOVE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA SOON AFTER COMPLETION OF THE INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT. IF, AS BOTH THE SECRETARY AND HE SUSPECTED, NOT ENOUGH IN THE WAY OF TERRITORIAL CHANGES COULD BE OFFERED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO SATISFY SYRIA, HE WOULD THEN CONSIDER THE SUGGESTION THAT SOME MINOR "COSMETIC" TERRITORIAL CHANGES MIGHT BE UNILATERALLY IMPLEMENTED BY ISRAEL. THE SECRETARY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAD NO MANDATE FROM THE CABINET OR ANYBODY ELSE TO NEGOTIATE WITH SYRIA, AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE HAD TO BE CAREFUL IN HIS PUBLIC REMARKS TO AVOID LEAVING THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD EXCEEDED THE AUTHORITY ACCORDED HIM BY THE CABINET. IT WAS HIS PLAN TO GO BEFORE THE CABINET BEFORE HIS NEXT VISIT TO WASHINGTON, DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THE SYRIAN NEGOTIATION PROBLEM, AND GET THE CABINET'S AGREEMENT ON THE PARAMETERS WITHIN WHICH HE CAN OPERATE WITH THE UNITED STATES. BOTH THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT (IN HIS TELEPHONE CALL) HAD SAID THAT THEY HOPED RABIN COULD VISIT WASHINGTON SHORTLY AFTER SADAT. RABIN HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT, HE SAID, THAT HE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO COME BUT NOT BEFORE THE END OF OCTOBER.

TOON

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